

June, but it is not until the latter half of July that
 It swells to
 a mighty tide. By the end of September the
 Inundation Is
 at Its greatest height The country Is now
 submerged, and
 presents the appearance of a sea of turbid water,
 from which
 the towns and villages, built on higher ground,
 rise like
 islands. For about a month the flood remains
 nearly
 stationary, then sinks more and more rapidly,
 till by De-
 cember or January the river has returned to
 Its ordinary
 bed. With the approach of summer the level of
 the water
 continues to fall. In the early days of June the
 Nile Is
 reduced to half Its ordinary breadth ; and
 Egypt, scorched
 by the sun, blasted by the wind that has blown
 from the
 Sahara for many days, seems a mere
 continuation of the
 desert. The trees are choked with a thick
 layer of grey
 dust A few meagre patches of vegetables,
 watered with
 difficulty, struggle painfully for existence in the
 Immediate
 neighbourhood of the villages. Some appearance
 of verdure
 lingers beside the canals and In the hollows from
 which the
 moisture has not wholly evaporated. The plain
 appears to
 pant In the pitiless sunshine, bare, dusty, ash-
 coloured,
 cracked and seamed as far as the eye can see
 with a net-
 work of fissures. From the middle of April till
 the middle
 of June the land of Egypt is but half alive,
 waiting for the
 new Nile.¹

For countless ages this cycle of natural
 events has irrigat
 determined the annual labours of the Egyptian
 husband-^{so} g

man. The first work of the agricultural year is
 the cutting in Egy

170; Seneca, *Natur. Quaest.* iv. 2. (tember 22).
 This agrees exactly with

i-io; E. W. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (Paisley and London, 1895), pp. 17 sq. 495; A. Erman, *op. cit.* pp. 21-25; G. Maspero, *op. cit.* i. 22 sqq. • How-
 summer solstice, ever, since the Suez Canal was cut, xviii. 167; *Qziaest.* iv. rain has been commoner in Lower Egypt (A. H. Sayce on Herodotus, Nile does not rise in Egypt till the last ii. 14). week of June (*Plandhuch der mathe-*
¹ G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient Classique*, i. 22-26 ; descriptions of A. Erman, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 23. According to Lane (*op. cit.* pp. 17 sq.) the Nile rises in Egypt about the summer solstice (June 21) and reaches its greatest height by the autumnal equinox (Sep-
 the-statement of Diodorus 36. 2). Herodotus the rise of the river lasted 495 days from the summer solstice, Compare Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* v. 57, 2. I. According to Prof. Ginzel the Nile does not rise in Egypt till the last week of June (*Plandhuch der mathe-*
inatisclien und technischen i. 154). For ancient Egypt in time of flood see ii. 97 ; Diodorus Siculus, i. 36. 8 sq. ; Strabo, xvii. i. 4, p. 788 j *natura animalium*, x. Aelian, *De Natur. Quaest.* iv. 12 ; Seneca, iv. 2. 8 and ii.